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Watson's Art Journal,

A WEEKLY RECORD OF MUSIC, ART AND LITERATURE.

HENRY F. WATSON, EDITOR.

NEW SERIES—No. 199.
VOL. VII.—No. 17.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 1867.

{FOUR DOLLARS PER YEAR.
SINGLE COPIES, 10 CTS.

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CORREGGIO.

A TALE TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

The next morning, the Count Castiglione entered his chamber with a sullen look, flung his sword on the table, and despatched his servant to fetch a servant to dress a wound in his right arm. As the servant went on his errand, the Marchese Rossi came in.

"Ha! sir Count! are you wounded?" asked he, with an expression of sympathy.

"A scratch," replied the Count; "the painter fights like the devil, and I may thank my good fortune I came off so well. After all, it would have been better, if I had at first (I was compelled to, after my useless labor) quietly listened to my adversary. The matter is now cleared up; Allegri is an enthusiast, a dreamer, but at least a noble fellow."

"Such characters are the more interesting," observed the Marchese, shrugging his shoulders.

Castiglione eyed him keenly. "I understand you not, Marchese," he said; "you pass for Allegri's friend, and yet you are the

one to awaken in me suspicion against him,"

"I could answer," said Rossi, "that I am indeed the friend of Correggio, but not of his follies; and that an approving conscience is dearer to me than his friendship, so that I have held it my duty to make the communication to you. I pass for Correggio's friend, because our duke took the whim into his head to appoint me to that post, and I should have proved myself a poor courtier had I set myself against the Prince's order. Thus I am the painter's friend; and as much so as a man like me can be the friend of so haughty and splenetic a person. If you knew how deeply my pride has often been wounded by him, and what unearthly patience it requires to follow his sudden fancies and turns of humor, without giving them a baneful direction, you would pity me."

"I pity you, indeed!" said the Count, with some contempt. Rossi continued—

"And is it not reasonable that I should wish my friend, if not at the deuce, at least a little salutary chastisement for all the torments I have suffered in his company? If a morose humor takes him, he sets himself to talk of his dear wife, of his love to her, of his inconstancy. Gives me a catalogue of her virtues, and of his own faults, which register I have ten times better by heart than he. Then he bethinks himself of his first love, and he describes the beauty of the damsel that kindled the flame; anon he falls to his pictures, talks of design, composition, drawing, coloring, effect, chiaroscuro, etc., which I do not understand. If I persuade myself that I comprehend something of it, and have a word to throw in, he laughs in my face, derides me, tells the story to the Duke, Romano, and his pupils, and I am the laughing stock of the whole circle. A plague upon the fellow's arrogance."

"Enough!" answered Castiglione, gravely; "you love him not, you cannot love him, for he has done you injury wantonly, if not with malicious intent. You wish him ill—you confess it honestly—and were I in your place, I should perhaps not exceed you in magnanimity. These circumstances prevent you

having the impartiality I require in his accuser, so that you will not be surprised that I attach little or no weight to your information."

"That as you will!" replied Rossi, sullenly; "but I repeat to you that what I have said is true, and that Correggio, as he himself confesses, adores your affianced bride."

"Ay, but as a muse, as a Saint."

"A muse. a Saint? Ha! ha! The love of another's mistress is quite a different feeling from the adoration of a muse or a Saint. You may call it what you will, the thing remains the same."

"Well, let him consume, the victim of his mad passion; what is my concern therein?"

"Supposing his passion to be returned," suggested Rossi.

"Ha!" cried Castiglione, starting up! "what do you dare insinuate?"

"Signor Count," answered the Marchese, quietly, "you speak as if Correggio were a man who stood no chance of finding favor in female eyes; and yet it is known to you, that he has turned the heads, not only of our court dames, but of half the women in the capital; and that when a youngster is brought into the world, ten to one he is christened Antonio, in honor of Correggio. And to give him his due, you must acknowledge that this frenzy of the women is excusable; for really, I am acquainted with no man, who, in beauty of person, noble carriage, and, when he pleases, insinuating manners, can equal, much less surpass him. Now hold you yourself so all accomplished, as to run no risk from the rivalry of Correggio, in the eyes of the young, enthusiastic, and susceptible Isaura?"

The Count bit his lip, and replied with forced calmness: "Your audacity deserves chastisement, which you shall receive, so soon as this arm is able to lift a sword. Be assured, meanwhile, that Correggio shall be warned of the falsehood of his pretended friend!"

Rossi departed in a rage; but a sting rankled in Castiglione's heart.

Michael Angelo left Mantua, after a visit of

many days, not failing before his departure to express publicly his high opinions of Correggio's genius.

"It is true," he remarked, "that Antonio is sometimes not quite correct in drawing; that he neglects the study of anatomy; but how sublimely conceived are all his pictures! full of poetry—original throughout; and the magic of his coloring enchants the severest judge, as well as the amateur."

Not only this, but the proud Florentine, who had unwillingly yielded the meed of praise to the great Sanzio, expressed his verdict in an admirable sonnet, which he handed to Allegri at parting. The disciples of Romano disputed much over this, and pronounced it "something unheard of from the haughty, stern Buonarroti."

It being observed everywhere, that he showed the very highest consideration for Correggio, it was not a little remarkable to notice how rapidly Allegri rose in the estimation of all, particularly in that of the Duke, who declared him the jewel of his court. This was enough to make the courtiers, who had hitherto felt it their duty to admire, feel themselves bound now to idolize.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that with Correggio's rising reputation, the number of his secret enemies increased, and that they hated him the more bitterly, the higher he was placed above their enmity. The painter knew little of this; he was absorbed in his art. The Leda was now completed—and the connoisseurs disputed among themselves whether the picture was not more perfect than his *Io*; Correggio himself gave it the preference. When Castiglione saw the painting, he started as if struck by a bolt; for again Isaura seemed to breathe in the image, though the features were not entirely hers.

Correggio marked his emotion, and secretly enjoyed it. The Count's surprise and resentment were so much the more ludicrous, as the artist knew full well he dared not express it, if he would not pass for a madman. No one could answer in the affirmative the question—"If he thought Isaura the original of Leda?" Though a certain inexplicable resemblance could be traced, it was a likeness not attainable by a careful copy of the several features—but that higher resemblance, to be felt when the ingenious artist has transfused into his ideal the original, spiritual expression of a beloved being.

Antonio had not hitherto looked upon the fair Isaura with other eyes than the admiring ones of an enthusiastic painter. So he openly acknowledged after his duel with the Count, but even while he avowed it, this pure and blameless feeling underwent a change.

Whether from mere vanity or from thoughtlessness, it is too certain that Isaura felt an inclination toward him, which led her to forget, not exactly her station, but her pride. He, himself, reflected not upon his course in the event of success; he devoted himself with heartfelt impulse to the object—winning the love of the beautiful Princess.

Castiglione kept his word, and took an opportunity to inform Correggio, when the artist one day made him a visit, of the treachery of the Marchese. But, instead of flying into a passion, and challenging Rossi on the spot, as the Count expected, the painter laughed heartily, when he learned that the Marchese had been his friend at the Duke's command, and how bitterly he had complained of the imposed duty.

"Tell me yourself," he said, when Castiglione blamed his levity, "tell me yourself,

if it is not laughable that such a man as Rossi, who knows how to carry his weapon as well as you and I, in obedience to a command should put on the semblance of friendship to a man whom he hated—who has ridiculed, tormented him—and I must confess, treated him often with contempt. But have patience, my good Marchese! I will make hell too hot for you with my friendship."

In vain Castiglione represented to him that new provocations would only arouse the vengeance of Rossi, which would slowly but surely overtake him, since the Marchese was too mean to dare him to the encounter openly. Correggio persevered in thinking the matter not worthy serious consideration, and ended by asking the Count, somewhat scornfully, "To what, I pray you, am I indebted for the honor of your sudden care for my life and welfare?"

"Not, certainly, to your behavior towards me," replied Castiglione; "but were you my mortal enemy, I would not suffer you to rush blindly to your ruin, or see a cowardly knave creep behind to thrust you into the abyss."

"It is well, Signor Count!" cried the painter with honest warmth; "I thank you for your caution, and acknowledge your nobleness; but I beseech you let me have my own way! I would not torment myself with apprehensions, (which indeed seem to me ill-grounded) even had I reason to do so. Better to fall suddenly under the assassin's knife, or drink welcome death in the sparkling wine cup, than with trouble and suspicion to measure every step in the flowery path of life, when to tread it heedlessly and gaily, is alone worthy of being called life." Herewith he took leave of the Count, before he could pursue the argument. Castiglione thought proper to lay the whole matter before the Duke, and the immediate consequence of his information was, that the Marchese Rossi received permission to retire to his seat in the country, as soon as it suited him. Rossi smiled ironically and shrugged his shoulders, muttered a curse or two, and the next morning left Mantua.

Gonzaga retained Correggio's picture a considerable time in his possession; at length both the *Io* and Leda were sent to Charles V., who was on a visit to Florence; the Madonna with St. George, was despatched to Modena.

The Emperor, enraptured with the magnificent productions of the great master, felt a desire to become personally acquainted with him; and it was soon announced that His Highness would have pleasure in visiting the painter at his birthplace, Correggio.

This was an honor no other artist had ever received at the hand of an Emperor. Gonzaga informed his favorite of the Imperial design, appointed a day for him to leave Mantua for Correggio, and said, on parting from him: "You go from me as a great painter; if I am not mistaken, the Emperor means well towards you, and will make you a great lord. Go on, Correggio! in life, as in art, even higher; and the nearer me, the better!"

Proud and happy, his bosom filled with delightful hopes, and his head with bold schemes, Antonio left Mantua.

"Enough for to-day!" said the illustrious Master Allegri, as he laid aside pencil and pallet, stepped back a few paces from the easel, and stood with folded arms, gazing at a picture just completed.

"A fickle thing is man's heart!" said he,

after a thoughtful pause, "A few months ago I stood in this very spot—my heart full of grief—weary of life! Now, how bright, how joyful is each dawning day! and all life can offer of good is mine! Renown—Love—Wealth—and the power and mind to enjoy! Yes, even sorrow did me service while she claimed me for her own, for she breathed a soul of melancholy into my work, and opened the way for them to all hearts. And thou, dear, beloved image! no feeling heart shall pass thee by unmoved; but for once imagine the delight—not to love in vain. It is mine."

Some one knocked without; Correggio hastily concealed the picture, turning the face to the wall, and opened the door.

It was the Marchese Rossi.

"A fair good morrow, Master Allegri!" cried he to the astonished painter. "Ha! ha! you are puzzled to account for my unexpected visit?"

"Almost!" answered Correggio, with some haughtiness. "If, however, my old friend comes on the part of Duke Frederico Gonzaga, to invite me to Mantua, all is quite clear to me."

"Well said!" cried the Marchese, with a smile, as he threw his hat on the table, and settled himself comfortably in a seat. "I have nothing now to do with an embassy from Frederico Gonzaga; I come of my own accord, and now really as your friend, even because I come of my own accord."

"That may be seen," said Correggio. "In what can I serve you?"

"First, with a good drink, for I am tired."

Allegri called for wine; a servant brought it, and with him came the painter's son, little Giovanni.

"Ho, ho! Cupid!" cried the Marchese, "how he is grown! Take heed, Correggio, that he does not grow over your head, the Cupid I mean."

"I thank you for him, Marchese; but the boy's name is not Cupid, but Giovanni."

"Or Ascanius, eh! was not that the name of the supposed son of Æneas, that slept in Dido's lap?"

"What means your silly talk?" interrupted the painter, reddening. "Let the boy go; go away, Giovanni; and you, Marchese, speak reasonably if you would have me listen to you."

Rossi rose, placed himself directly before the artist, and looking him in the face, said, "That there is no deceit in you, Correggio, I know well now; for I see in your eyes how much you fear that I should really begin to speak reasonably with you. Had you been prudent, you would have taken a lesson from my treachery; but that was not your business; thoughtless, self-conceited, blinded by passion, you rushed to your destruction!"

"My good Mentor?" replied Correggio, mockingly, "I perceive to what you allude. If it can quiet you, know that I am certain in my own affairs, and have nothing to fear; nothing! on the contrary, you shall soon see with astonishment, to what Correggio can aspire!"

Meanwhile, the trampling of horses' feet was heard without, and soon after a messenger from the Duke entered, bringing his Highness' gracious greeting to Master Antonio Allegri, and announcing, that on the morrow early, the Emperor's majesty would arrive at Correggio.

"Now," asked the painter, with a look of triumph at the Marchese.

"And I say, now! my Allegri!" replied

Rossi, gravely, and followed the messenger out of the house.

The morning was bright and beautiful. In rich, but simple attire, Antonio Allegri sat in his studio, awaiting his illustrious visitor.

At length the hour struck, and, accompanied by the most distinguished of his suite, the Duke Gonzaga and Prince Cosmo at his side, Charles V., drew nigh the country seat of the painter of Correggio.

Correggio hastened out as soon as he knew of their approach, and held the stirrup for the Emperor to dismount, while he bent his knee to the ground before him. Charles beckoned to his followers, who formed a circle round himself and the artist. "We are come, Antonio Allegri," he said, "to prove to you how highly we esteem your mastery in your noble art. Be you numbered from this day among our chamberlains. Stand up, Cavalier Correggio." He gave him his hand to kiss, raised him from the ground, and then led the way into the house, the company following.

In the hall, where the painter had placed his best pictures for exhibition, the Emperor lingered with visible delight before each, often asking explanations of Correggio, often pointing out to the rest the peculiar beauties of this or that piece. At last he said, "I will see your work-room, also, Allegri! lead the way thither; and, if you are so disposed, you shall sketch a picture, a subject for which we will give you. Lead on."

Correggio led the way into his studio; the Emperor and the other visitors following.

"Strange?" cried Charles, as he entered the apartment, lighted for the convenience of the painter; "I feel as if I were entering a consecrated temple. Here—wonderful genius, thou dost create those works whose magic makes us forget they owe their existence to mortal art." He passed with slow steps through the room; suddenly he stopped before a picture turned to the wall.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Only an experiment," replied Allegri, embarrassed.

"Ha!" cried the Emperor, "we learn most from the experiments of great masters. An excellent opportunity to observe your art, for it is known to you, doubtless, that we dabble in it now and then ourselves."

Hesitatingly Correggio obeyed; a cry of astonishment and admiration broke from every lip; and almost overpowered with the splendor that burst on his sight, Charles stepped a pace backward. The picture represented Isaura in a light fanciful drapery.

"By the light of heaven!" exclaimed the Emperor at length; "your mastery over art startles the beholder? Never saw I anything so lovely and so grand at the same time. Is it a portrait?"

"Yes," answered Correggio.

"Of whom?"

"The Princess Isaura Cosmo."

"For whom did you paint it?"

"For myself."

"For yourself?"

"Yes, sire—for myself," said Correggio boldly, and approaching nearer; "for myself—for no one else. I love the original, and if you esteem me, as you say, the prince of living painters, I conjure you—"

"Hold!" cried Charles, "rash, vain man, what have you dared—"

Correggio looked at him surprised. The old Prince Cosmo then came to the Emperor's side and said respectfully—"Your Majesty will be pleased to forgive the man for

the painter's sake; it can only injure himself. My daughter submitted yesterday, at my parental command, to wed the illustrious Count Castiglione."

"Receive our congratulations," said Charles, turning to the Prince, "the name of Castiglione hath a goodly sound in our ears, for your cousin was one of our most valued servants." He then went up to Correggio, who stood pale, rigid, and speechless, and asked: "Will you part with the picture, Cavalier?"

"Not for all your kingdom," answered Correggio.

"The price is rather too high for me!" said the Emperor. "Keep it—and when you have gained the mastery over your insane passion, come to our court. We will welcome worthily the great painter, Antonio Allegri! Learn to live for your art!" He turned and left the house with his followers. Antonio remained alone, standing as if petrified.

"She—Castiglione's wife!" he cried, after a long pause; and turning to the picture, he repeated—"Thou, Isaura, faithless?"

"By compulsion!" said a well-known voice near him. He turned, and saw Rossi standing, and gazing upon him with looks of sympathy.

Two years after, and the Count Castiglione came in deep mourning to the bedside of the dying Correggio, and said—"Isaura is going before you; I bring you her last farewell."

Correggio smiled gently, pressed the Count's hand, and expired.

"He has appointed you his heir," said the Marchese Rossi. "You are to keep his boy and Isaura's picture."

Castiglione trembled with emotion, as he closed the eyes of the dead.

From Herr Karl Birkenbühl's *Federzeichnungen aus Rom*.
A VISIT TO FRANZ LISZT IN ROME.

The building in which Liszt resides at Rome is of unpretending appearance; it is, and fancy may have pictured such a place as Liszt's Sanssouci, a melancholy, plain little monastery. But, by its position, this quiet abode is so favored, that probably few homes in the wide world can be compared to it. Situate upon the old Via Sacra, it is the nearest neighbor of the Forum Romanum, while its windows look towards the Capitol, the ruins of the Palatine Palace, and the Colosseum. A life of contemplation—in such a site, is forced upon one of its own accord. Why should not the change in the sentiments of a happy child of the world be connected with this profoundly serious world of ruins?

I mounted a few steps leading up to the open door of the monastery, and all at once grew uncertain what to do, for I saw before me a handsome staircase adorned with pillars, such as I should not have expected from the poor exterior of the building. Had not a notice in the form of a visiting card over the large door at the top of the stairs met my eye, I should have considered it necessary to make further enquiries. As it was, however, I was able to gain from the card itself the information I needed. I approached and read: "L'Abbé Franz Liszt." So, really an Abbé. A visiting-card half supplies the place of an autopsy.

After I had arranged my necktie and pulled on my gloves more tightly, I grasped

courageously the green cord, that was to summon the porter. Two servants, not in tail coats it is true, but clad in irreproachable black, received me; one hastened to carry in my card, while the other helped me off with my top-coat.

My ideas of a genuine monkish-life suffered a rude shock. Wherefore two servants before the cell of a monk; or if attendant spirits, why were they not, according to monastic rules, simply lay brothers?

But I had not to trouble my brains long with these obtrusive questions, for I was immediately plunged into still greater mental confusion.

The messenger who had gone to announce me returned and ushered me in with a notification that the Signor Abbate requested me to wait a moment in—the drawing-room; yes, actually, a drawing-room, in the most elegant acceptance of the word. It wants nothing either of the requisites for northern comfort, or of the contrivances demanded by the climate of Rome, though glaring luxury appears scrupulously avoided.

I stood then in the saloon of the Comendatore Liszt! Abbé and Commander! The correct employment of the domestic titles rendered the first interview much more easy than it otherwise would have been.

I was by no means so inquisitorial in my survey as to be able to give a Walter-Scott-like description of Liszt's saloon. Darkness, moreover, prevailed in the large apartment, as, according to Italian usage and necessity, the window-shutters were closed against the rays of the morning-sun. I was attracted by the album-table in the middle of the apartment more than by aught else. Upon it lay chiefly Italian works of a religious nature in votive bindings. That Liszt here, too, as Abbate, lives in the midst of creative spirits is proved by these dedicatory offerings.

The door was opened, and the well-known artistic figure advanced in a friendly manner towards me. That the skillful fingers of the great pianist pressed the hand of me, a simple writer, is a fact which, for the completeness of my narrative, must not remain unmentioned. The first and most immediate impression produced upon me by Liszt's appearance was that of surprising youthfulness. Even the unmistakably grizzled, though still thick, long flowing hair, which the scissors of the Tonsure have not dared to touch, detract but little from the heart-entrancing charm of his unusual individuality. Of fretfulness, satiety, monkish abnegation, and so on, there is not a trace to be detected in the features of Liszt's interesting and characteristic head. And just as little as we find Liszt in a monk's cell do we find him in a monk's cowl. The black soutane sits scarcely less elegantly on him than, in its time, the dress coat. Those who look upon Liszt as a riddle will most decidedly not find the solution of it in his outward appearance.

After having interchanged a few words of greeting, we proceeded to the work-room. After compelling me to take an arm-chair, Liszt seated himself—apologizing to me by stating that he had a letter to despatch in a hurry—at the large writing-table. Upon this, too, lay a great many things more nearly pertaining to the Abbé than to the artist. But neatly written sheets of music showed that musical production formed part of the master's daily occupations. The comfortable room bore generally the unmistakable stamp of a room for study, of an artist's workshop.